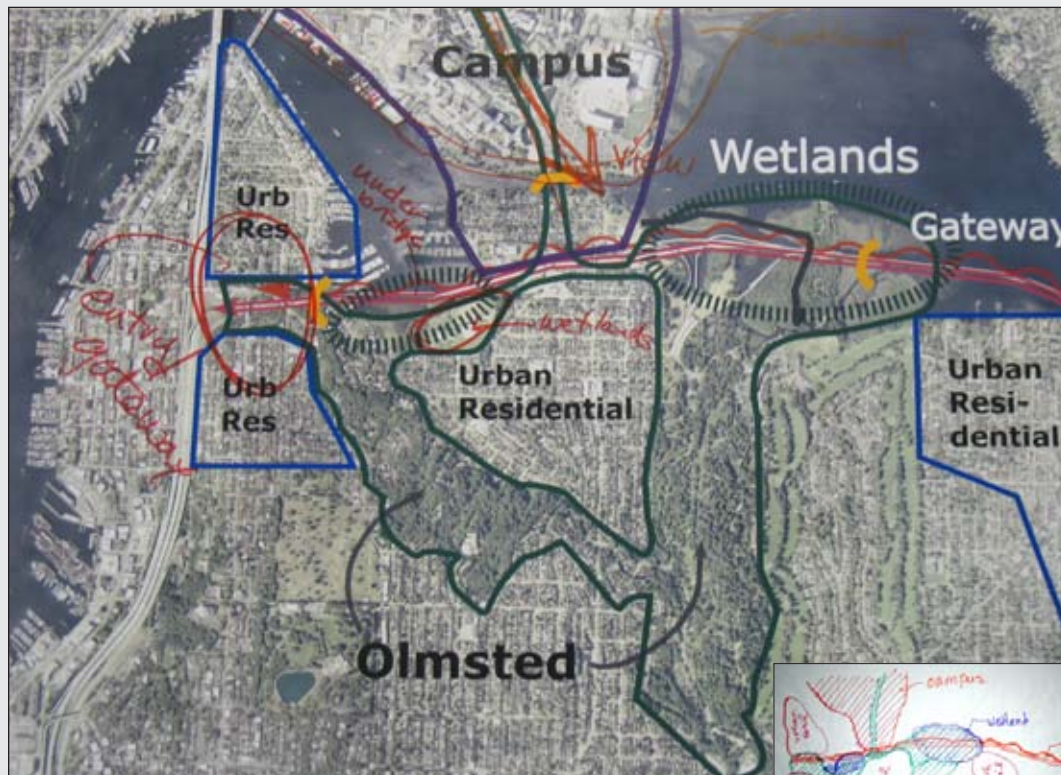




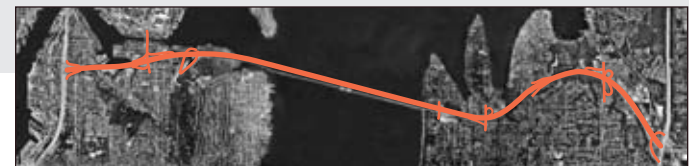
THEMATIC ZONES



This chapter explores the concept of a “thematic zone”. Thematic zones for the Eastside and Westside were defined by the respective groups during DAG workshop charettes. Aesthetic design goals and principles emerged from the workshop discussions, as did a sense of desirable materials, color, and form that could manifest the aesthetic vision and goals. This sense became the beginnings of a design palette of images and descriptions.

The criteria for what constitute a thematic zone are discussed in this chapter and the results of the DAG thematic zone workshops are illustrated and described. The general outline of this chapter is:

- Thematic zones map, theme, and aesthetic goals
- A description of each thematic zone with vignettes showing places and features in that zone
- Opportunities maps and ideas
- Aesthetic Design Principles
- A design palette





Photographs of today's corridor and its surroundings

DAG Thematic Zones



A thematic zone is an area with its own character and qualities. We use the concept of thematic zones to help us understand the special qualities of communities, neighborhoods, and landscapes that are connected to SR 520. The character of each thematic zone is a source of ideas that will help us choose aesthetic treatments that are appropriate to and enhance the surrounding neighborhoods or areas. For example, the design of a bicycle-pedestrian path or transit station could be influenced by adjacent natural areas, broad scenic views, or the traditions and history of architecture in nearby neighborhoods.

The physical features that we considered as key elements in defining thematic zones are the built environment (uses, types, and styles of buildings), street patterns, landscapes (open space, parks, etc), density of development, topography and terrain, and vegetation types and patterns.

The Design Advisory Group was divided into Eastside and Westside subgroups to identify, locate, and name thematic zones in their community. The subgroups found:

Westside Thematic Zones

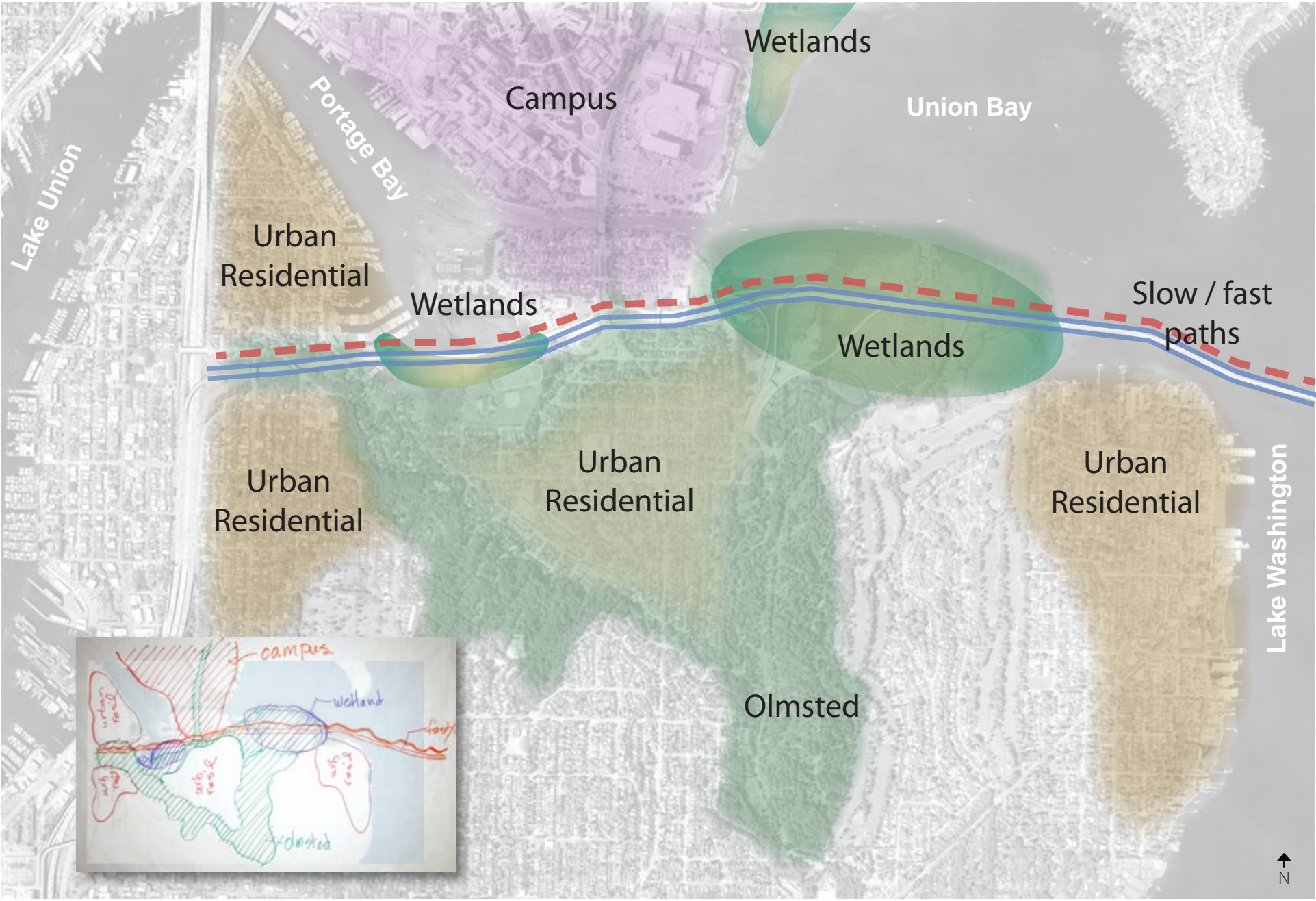
- Olmsted
- Wetland
- Urban Residential
- Campus

Eastside Thematic Zones

- Rural-natural Residential
- Mixed Use "In-transition" Zone

Lake Washington belongs to the entire area and provides an important connection between the communities on either side. It is discussed in the Corridor Unity chapter.

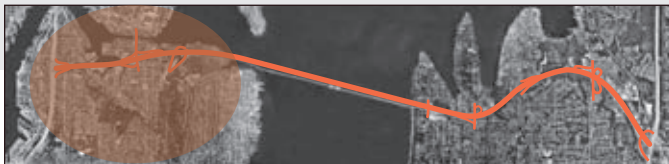
Westside Thematic Zones

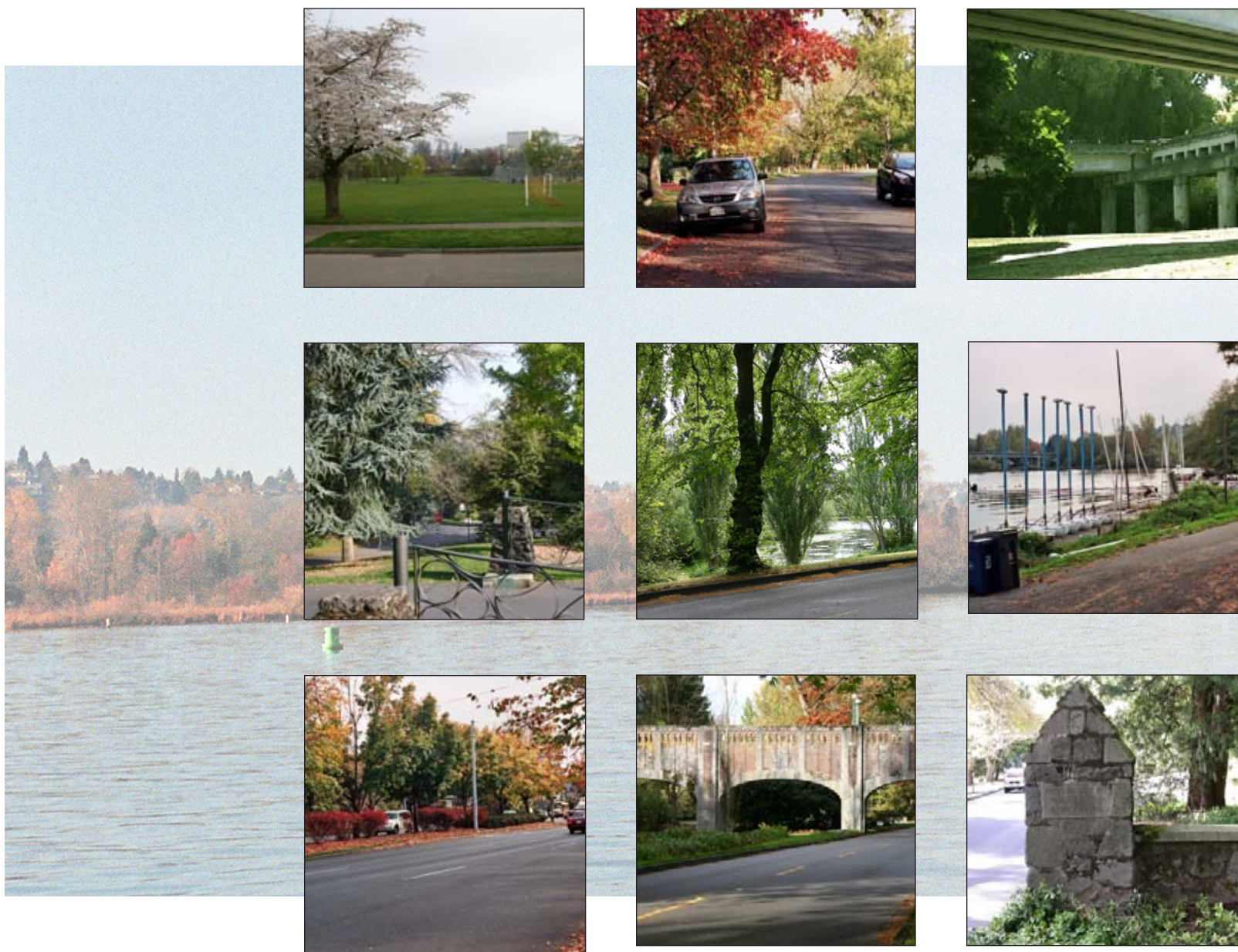


The visual theme for the Westside is “Tapestry”: the communities are a tapestry of landscapes, places, history, and activities.

GOALS

- The story of the area is told through interpretive signs, installations, and details that serve to witness the history of changes in values, in landscape, and in styles.
- The functions of wetlands, neighborhoods, and social connections are restored.
- Structures are designed to reveal and express the beauty inherent in the structural form.
- Circulation paths on bridges and lids provide a better coexistence among bicycles, vehicles, and pedestrians; preferably keep the paths separated.
- Facilities are interesting and attractive from many different view points; there are no “orphaned” places.
- The scale of details is appropriate to the location and to the pace of the viewer.
- High quality craftsmanship is evident at all scales because craftsmanship creates sense of pride and ownership.
- Olmstedian principles guide the design process for creating diversity within a coherent framework.





Images of the Olmsted Thematic Zone

Olmsted Thematic Zone

The Olmsted Thematic Zone is the greenbelt formed by the Washington Park Arboretum and Interlaken Park. The greenbelt extends along Lake Washington Boulevard East, into Roanoke Park, and into the Campus Thematic Zone along Montlake Boulevard. The thematic zone is so named because these parks and boulevards were designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm as part of an integrated park system for Seattle in the early twentieth century.

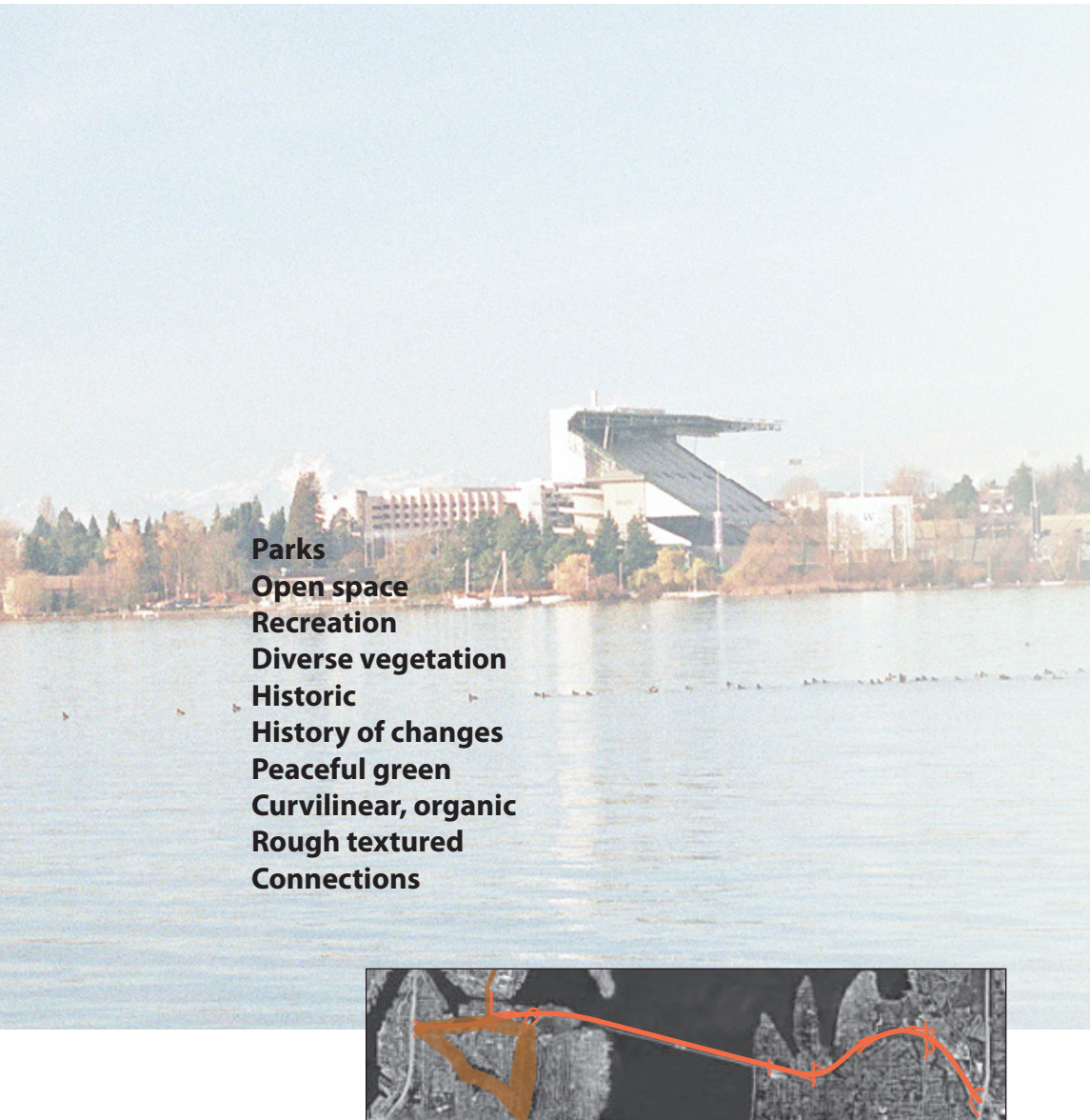
Olmstedian design emphasizes naturalistic landscapes and greensward parks, which are intended to restore people's good humor and health through exposure to fresh air, the beauty of plants and water, and outdoor recreation.

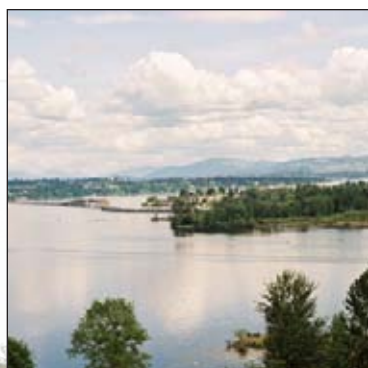
The basic characteristics of such landscapes are:

- Separation of vehicles and pedestrian paths
- Well-formed viewsheds and lines of sight
- Multiple-use places and spaces
- Diverse and natural-appearing vegetation

Streets in the Olmsted Thematic Zone are curvilinear and adapt to the topography by following the shoreline or winding along hillsides. Architectural ages and styles are varied, from depression-era WPA structures to modern, and are typically a part of the recreational landscape.

The Olmsted Thematic Zone is one of Seattle's most popular outdoor destinations - together with the Wetlands Thematic Zone - because they offer trails, bird watching, wildlife viewing, boating, fishing, open spaces, and the Arboretum's plant collections and displays.





Images of the Wetlands Thematic Zone

Wetlands Thematic Zone

The Wetlands Thematic Zone is the system of islands, inlets, wetlands, and marshes along SR 520 and part of the University of Washington shoreline. This zone includes the north shorelines of Montlake Playfield and the Washington Park Arboretum.

Public access to these wetlands and marshes varies. Foot paths and boardwalks cross and connect Marsh and Foster Islands, but no foot access has been established to the Portage Bay shoreline and marshes. Built structures in this thematic zone are limited to wetland paths, marinas, and docks.

The wetlands of south Portage Bay and Union Bay are functional wetlands and serve as wildlife habitat. A distinguishing characteristic of this thematic zone is the presence of a variety of bird species year-round including herons, ducks, and bald eagles.

As a natural extension of the Olmsted Thematic Zone, this is one of the most popular outdoor recreation destinations in the area. It provides opportunities to be in close contact with the varied flora and fauna of the region and these are popular boating and kayaking waters.

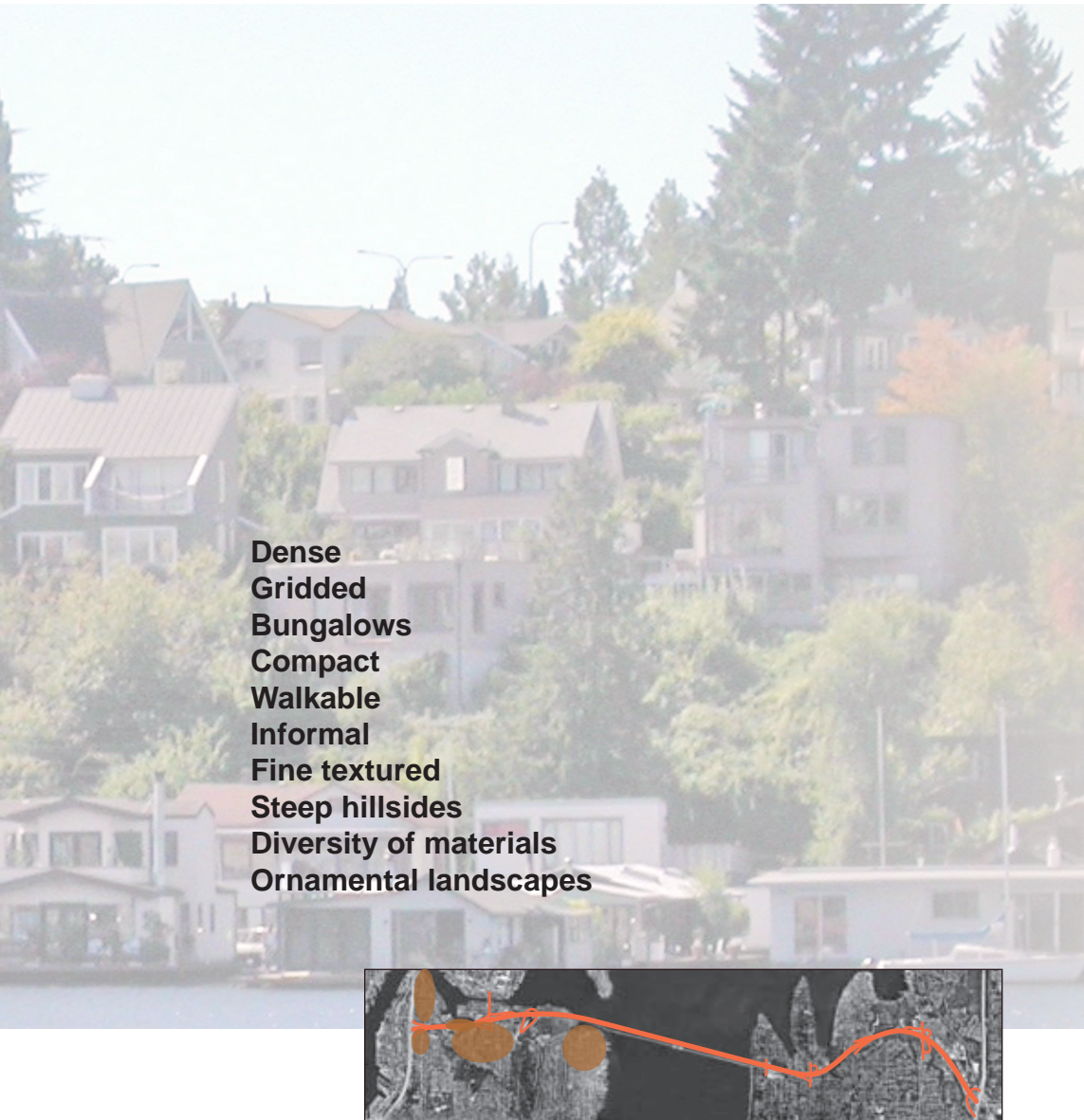
Water ~ land interface
Wetlands
Marinas
Active recreation
Habitat
Wildlife
Connections
Re-establish function





Images of the Urban Residential Thematic Zone

Urban Residential Thematic Zone



**Dense
Gridded
Bungalows
Compact
Walkable
Informal
Fine textured
Steep hillsides
Diversity of materials
Ornamental landscapes**

The Urban Residential Thematic Zone comprises the North Capitol Hill/Roanoke, Montlake, and Madison Park communities. Development is primarily dense single-family residential with a few multi-family apartments. Residential architecture ranges from Victorian to Four-square style with a predominance of eclectic revival. Most homes were built before World War II and many date to the early 1900s, such as in the North Capitol Hill area. In the Montlake area many of the houses date to the 1920s and 1930s and were built to 3/4 scale dimensions.

Streets in the Urban Residential Thematic Zone are in a grid pattern and densely lined with mature trees. These street trees extend the Olmsted Thematic Zone tree canopy into the neighborhoods forming a near continuous matrix of green. Landscapes are residential with a diverse mix of deciduous and evergreen, ornamental and native plants.

The I-5 and SR 520 interchange is the western terminus of SR 520 and has the potential to be a memorable gateway into Seattle. This thematic zone has several locations where scenic views of Portage Bay, the University of Washington, Lake Washington, the Cascade and Olympic Mountains, and Lake Union are available.



Images of the Campus Thematic Zone

Campus Thematic Zone

The Campus Thematic Zone includes the southeast corner of the University of Washington campus and the Shelby-Hamlin neighborhood on the peninsula between Portage and Union Bays. This thematic zone is an important focal point for activities of all kinds.

Development is dense and highly varied, encompassing research, medical, and recreation facilities, single-family residences, and parks. Buildings in the Campus Thematic Zone are highly diverse in architectural style, size, and age, but are primarily large public facilities and include the University of Washington's Medical Center, Husky Stadium, and Waterfront Activities Center and the Museum of History and Industry. Landscapes in this thematic zone are formal, well-established and well maintained, and include diverse ornamental plants.

The Montlake Cut is a special node where all the styles and travel modes - boat, bike, foot, and vehicle - of the other Westside thematic zones converge. Present in this area are urban-residential styles, the collegiate-gothic style of the campus and Montlake Bridge, and the Olmstedian boulevard character. The Montlake Bridge and the Cut act as a southern gateway into the campus.

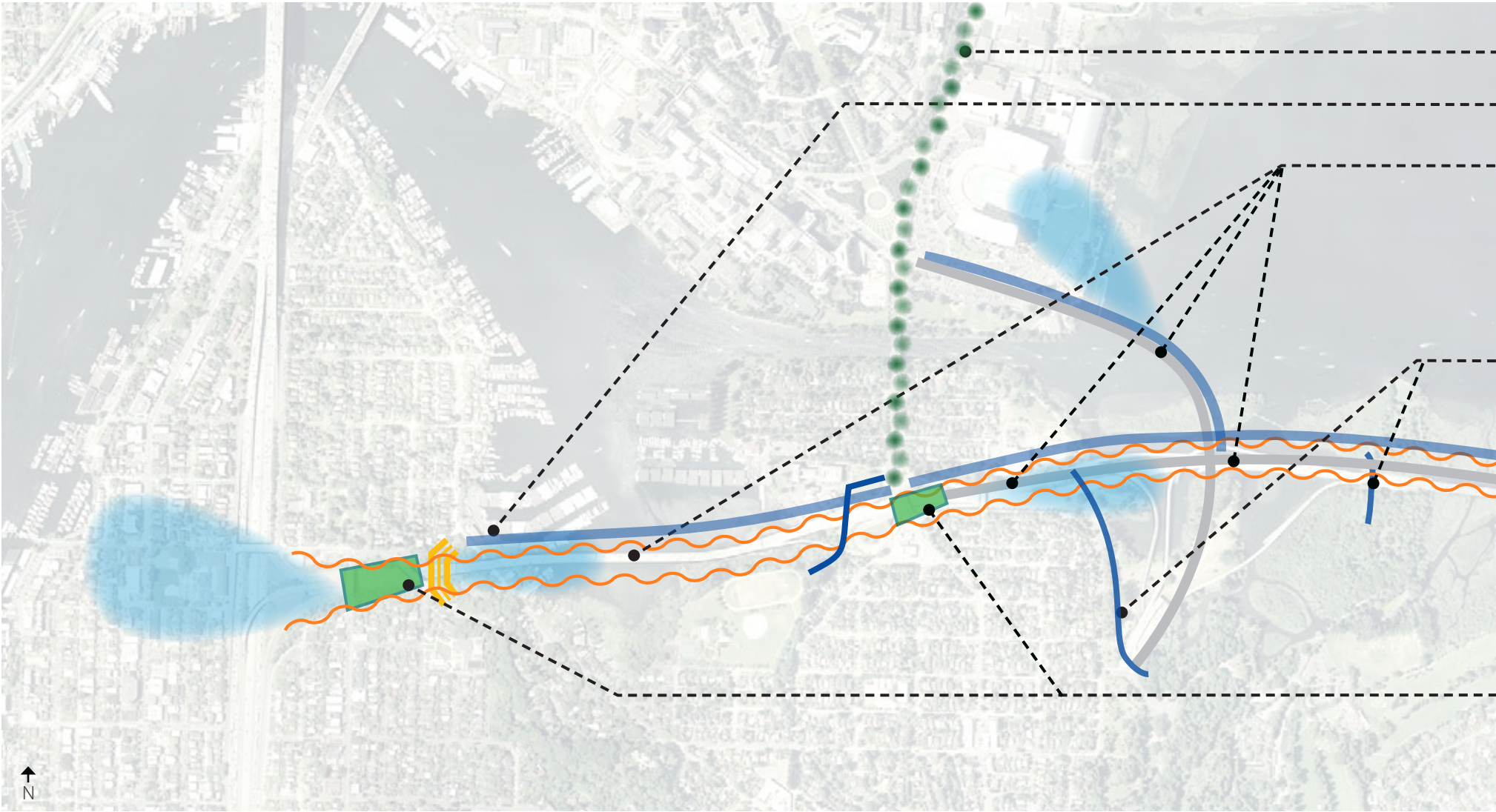
Residential streets follow a grid and serve local traffic, whereas the campus street plan is a mix of gridded and curvilinear reflecting the different eras of development. Montlake Boulevard is a major north-south arterial that connects the University of Washington/University District with neighborhoods to the south and north. It is an important connection to public transit, the SR 520-Montlake Boulevard interchange, and the Pacific Street/Montlake Boulevard intersection.



Historic structures
History
Formal
Urbane
Walkable
Connections - cultural, intellectual, local, regional, international
Diversity
Collegiate - Gothic
Rainier Vista
Coarse textured
Active recreation
Confluence of styles
Army Corps paths and channel
Spectator seating
Detailed



Westside Opportunities for Aesthetics



Gateways



Walls



Local trail



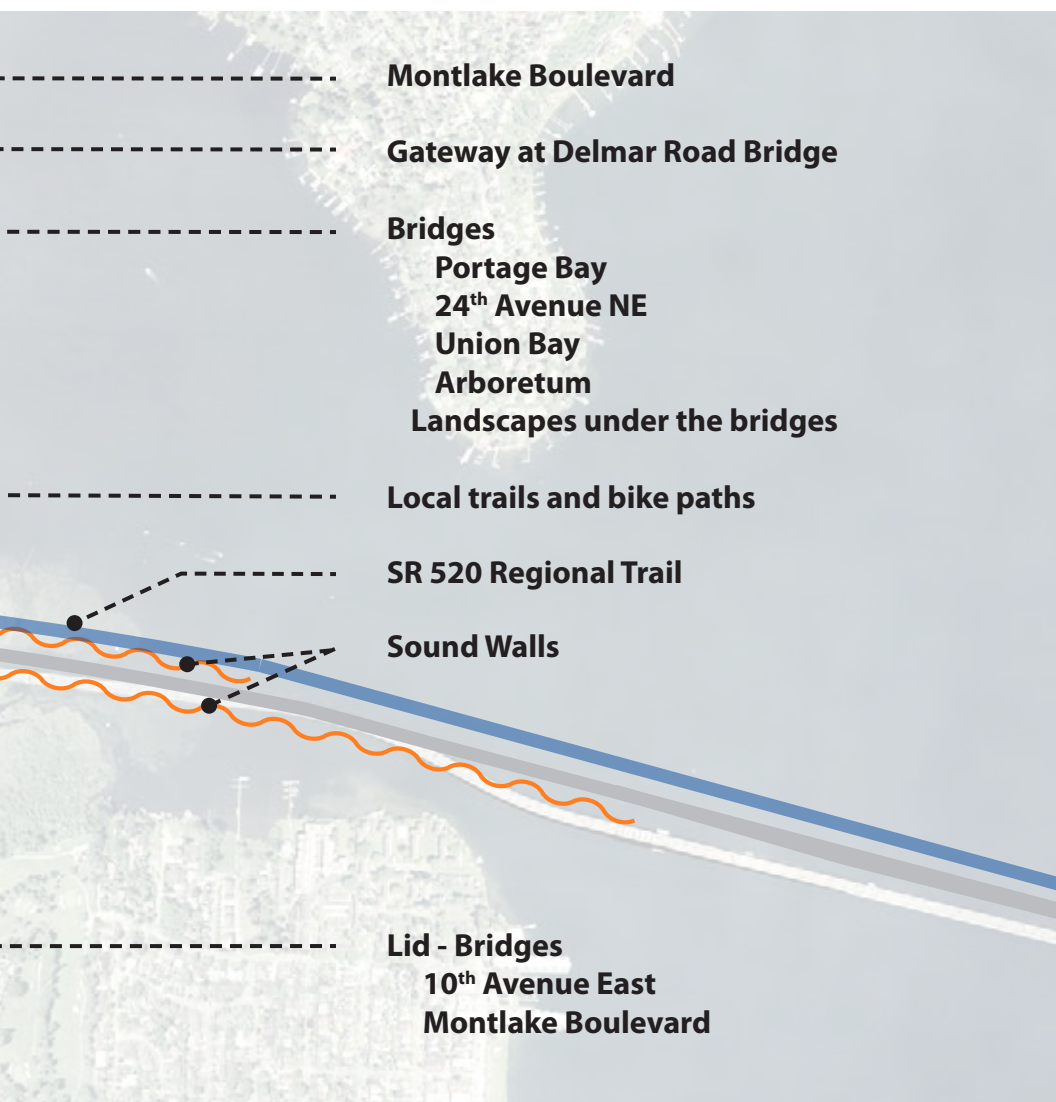
Regional trail



Lids



Views



Montlake Boulevard

Gateway at Delmar Road Bridge

Bridges

Portage Bay

24th Avenue NE

Union Bay

Arboretum

Landscapes under the bridges

Local trails and bike paths

SR 520 Regional Trail

Sound Walls

Lid - Bridges

10th Avenue East

Montlake Boulevard



Aesthetic Design Principles for the Westside



LANDSCAPES

- Tread lightly on land and over water. Especially through the Arboretum: narrower is better.
- Reveal the beauty that is inherent in the functioning of the wetlands.
- Create moments of “incidental civilities” that make places more humane and hospitable.

BRIDGES

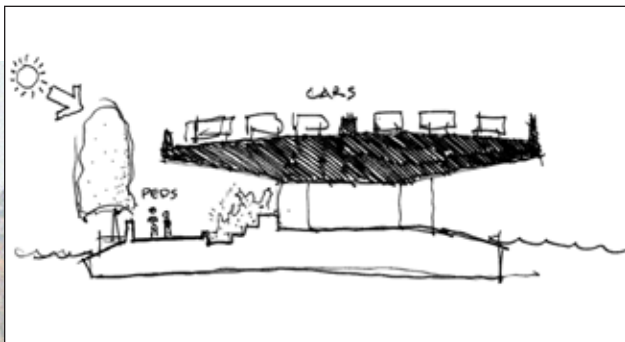
- Portage Bay and Union Bay Bridges should be visually unobtrusive and elegant.
- Under-bridge areas (Portage Bay/Montlake, Arboretum, and Union Bay) are an opportunity to create interesting places by adding details, educational features, and clear paths.
- Create boulevards out of 10th Avenue NE, Montlake Boulevard, and Lake Washington Boulevard.

HISTORY

- Celebrate the history of each neighborhood, find value in things that we often overlook
- Commemorate changes in values and preferences in styles and landscapes.

INTERCHANGES

- “Visual Friction”: use an increasing level of detail in aesthetic treatments along off-ramps to increase awareness of the need for different, slower driving behavior.
- Let each on/off-ramp reflect individual character of their landscape setting and community.



BICYCLE-PEDESTRIAN PATH AND TRAILS

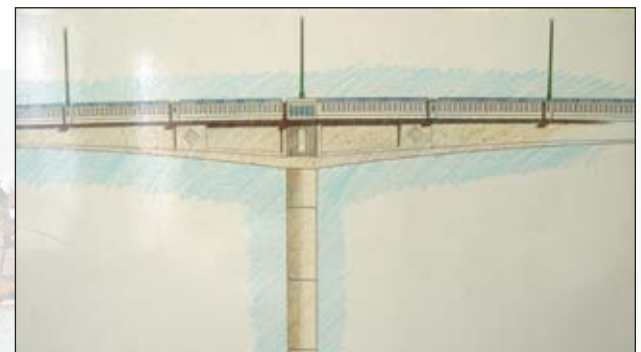
- Design trails through the Arboretum so they help protect and preserve wetland function.
- Use interpretive and educational elements and activities.
- Coordinate Montlake Boulevard's pedestrian realm between SR 520 and Husky Stadium with vehicle lanes and transit connections.
- Make the SR 520 bike-pedestrian path safe, comfortable and interesting.
- Use design of railing, walls, lighting, and materials to create rhythm and avoid monotony.
- Include educational elements on the SR 520 bike-pedestrian path over the Arboretum that highlights features below.

LIDS

- Lids should be designed as energy-filled urban open spaces that encourage pedestrian activities and provide meeting places.
- Lids are opportunities for separating pedestrian, motorized and non-motorized vehicle paths.
- Lids should have soft, pervious, green surfaces.
- Connections and energy will cultivate a sense of stewardship for the open space that will be created by the lids.
- Tunnel interiors should create a pleasant driving or waiting experience.

VIEWS

- Consider the different viewer experiences (boaters, joggers, walkers, riders, drivers).



A Palette for the Westside

FORM

Reveals function and structure in an aesthetic way



Cathedral-like character under the Aurora Bridge, Fremont, WA

LINES

Blend with and flow into the surroundings

Bold contemporary lines may be appropriate for some places



Amgen pedestrian bridge, Seattle



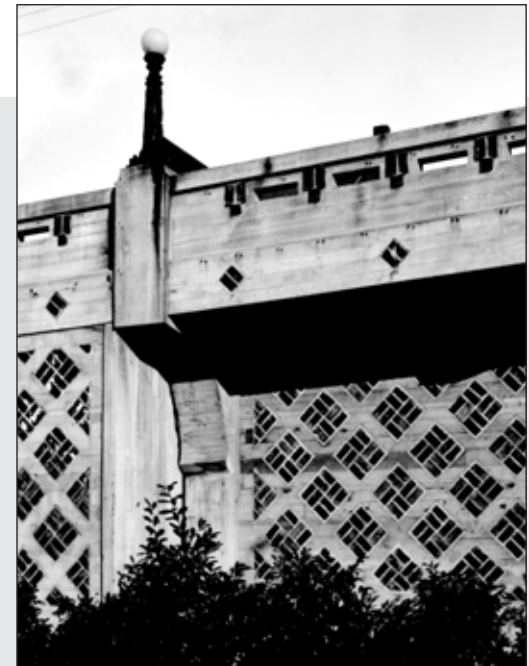
NOAA Steps, Seattle (G. Trakas)

MATERIALS

Terra cotta, brick, wood
Water - smooth and stormy
Textural



Wilcox Viaduct in the Arboretum, Seattle



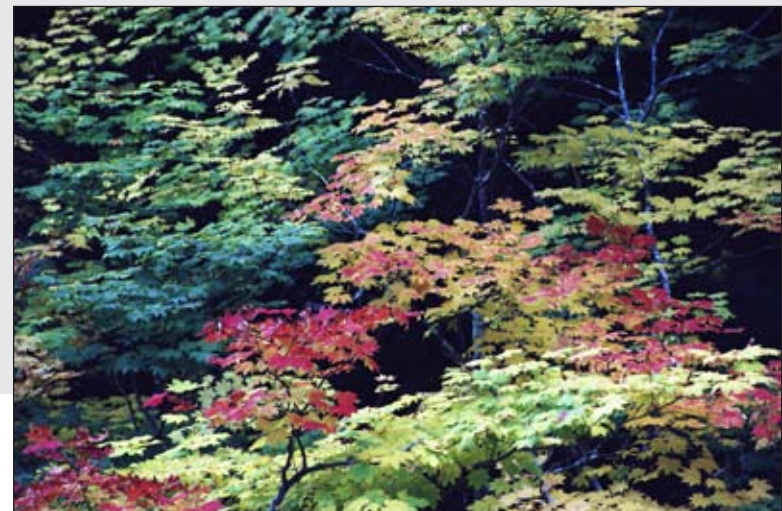
Brick detailing on Queen Anne bridge, Seattle

COLORS

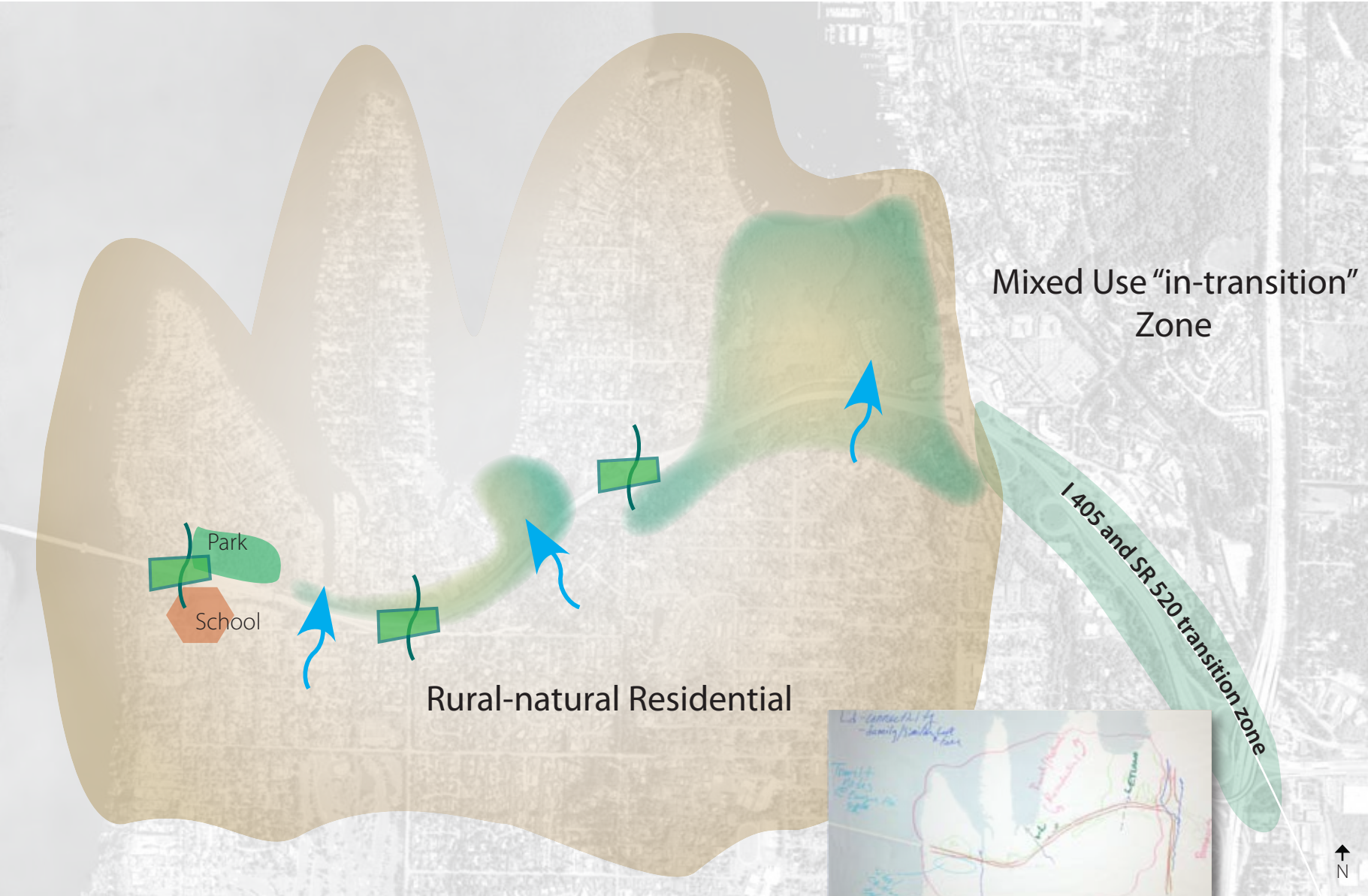
Muted, earthy-vegetal - wetlands
Vibrant, seasonal - Azalea Way
Architectural - brick, wood, stone
Textural



Landscape and vegetation colors and textures



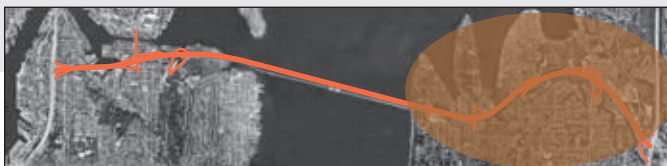
Eastside Thematic Zones

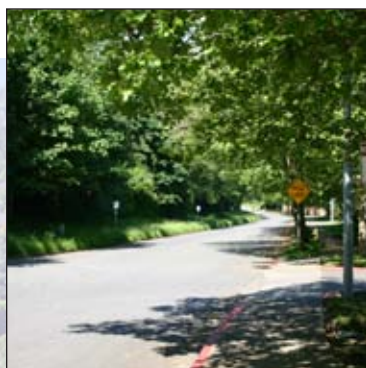


The visual theme for the Eastside is “One Community”: the Eastside is one community unified by the mature tree canopy and interconnected by streams and wetlands.

GOALS

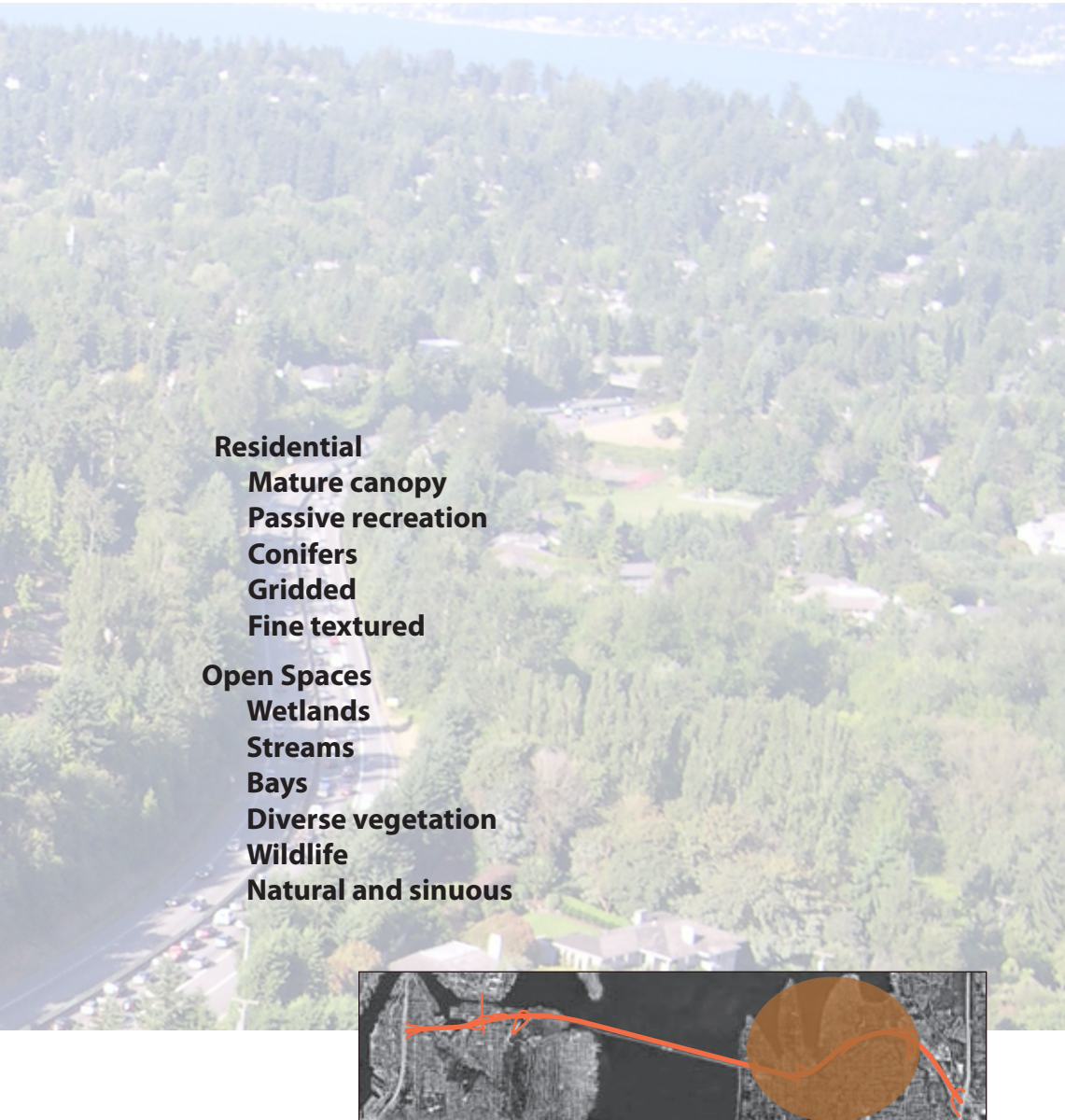
- Communities are reconnected across SR 520.
- Character-defining tree canopy is preserved or restored.
- Places are created for people to walk and meet.
- Aesthetic design expresses natural processes and community character.
- Design details create interesting patterns and textures that are inspired by the character and form of the Eastside landscape.
- Materials achieve the patina of maturity quickly so that new features don’t appear out of place.





Images of the Rural-Natural Residential Thematic Zone

Rural-Natural Residential Thematic Zone



Residential

Mature canopy
Passive recreation
Conifers
Gridded
Fine textured

Open Spaces

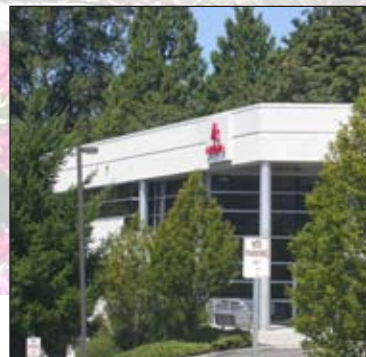
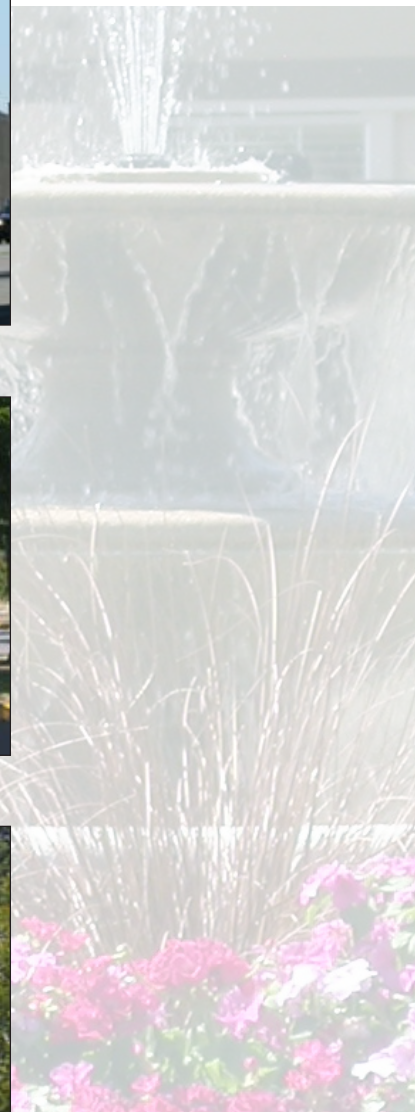
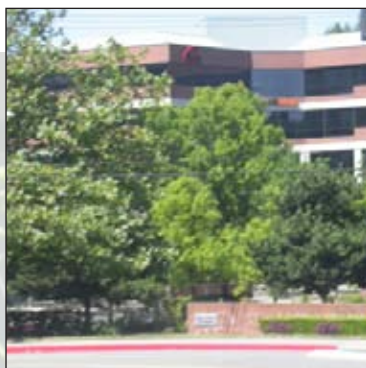
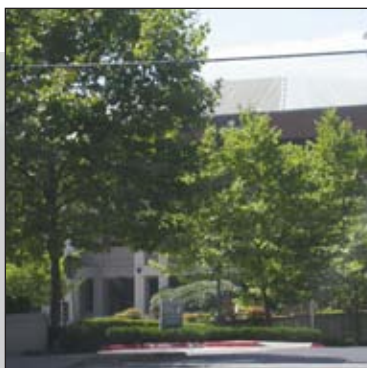
Wetlands
Streams
Bays
Diverse vegetation
Wildlife
Natural and sinuous

The Rural-Natural Residential Thematic Zone is defined by residential neighborhoods woven through native woodlands and along shorelines. A series of north-south hills gives this area broadly rolling topography and a variety of ecosystems including shoreline, wetland, riparian, and woodland. The tree canopies of the parks and open spaces along SR 520 are highly valued for the habitat and visual character they provide. Open spaces such as Fairweather Park, the Wetherill Nature Preserve, and the Yarrow Bay Wetlands help create the experience of driving through wooded countryside.

Development consists almost entirely of single-family residential with a few small commercial ventures that serve the local communities and an elementary school. Architectural styles include early twentieth century farm houses, mid-twentieth century ranch houses, and an eclectic blend of recently built homes and condominiums. The diverse residential landscapes add a gardenesque quality and seasonal color.

Roads are mostly residential two-lane collectors and arterials in a grid pattern laid upon the hilly, steep terrain. North-south arterials travel along the spines of hillsides and cross over SR 520: Evergreen Point Road, 84th Avenue Northeast, and 92nd Avenue Northeast. The Points Loop Trail is an important recreational connector that links the east and west communities along the north side of SR 520.

Distinguishing features of the motorist's experience of the highway in this thematic zone are the rhythm created by passing under these bridges and the green corridor created by the mature trees lining the highway. This thematic zone also has the dramatic water-land threshold at the Evergreen Point Road Bridge where the green sinuous corridor transitions to the wide expanse of Lake Washington.



Images of today's Mixed Use In-Transition Zone

Mixed Use “In-Transition” Zone

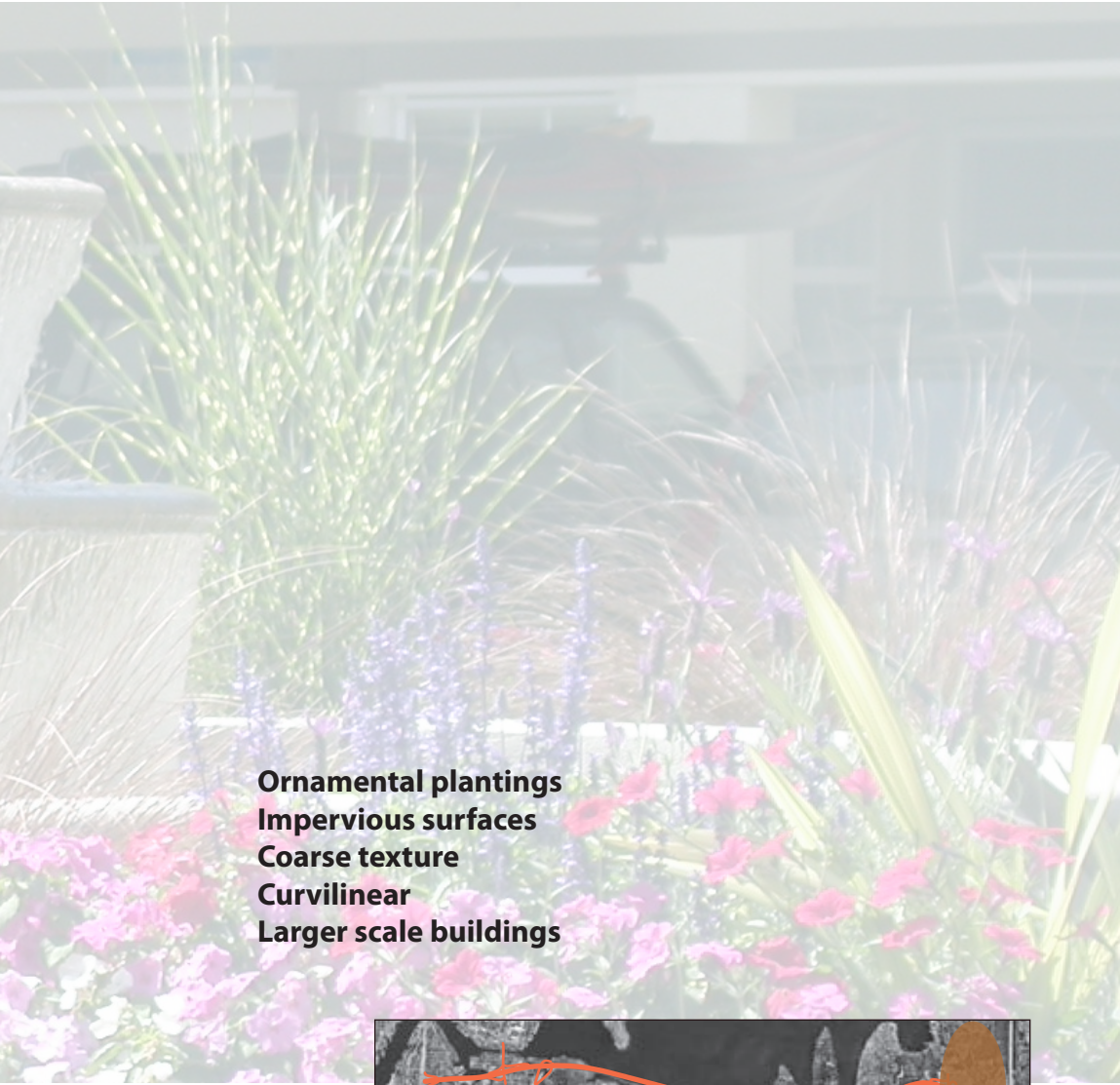
The Mixed Use “In-Transition” Zone is outside the “One Community” Thematic Zone, but is an important transition area between the aesthetic character of I-405 and the future character of the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV project area. “In-Transition” reflects the fact that this area is growing and changing rapidly, and that this section of SR 520 could be a transition between the aesthetic character of I-405 and that of SR 520.

The visual character of the Mixed Use In-Transition Zone is defined by the large footprint commercial, residential, and business buildings surrounded by formal or gardenesque landscaping. This area is also a transit hub with a park-and-ride lot and transit center, and interchanges at Bellevue Way/Lake Washington Boulevard East and 108th Avenue Northeast.

Architectural style is predominantly modern because the area is relatively new. Most of these buildings are two to five stories high office and condominium complexes, but there are a few one-story buildings that serve different businesses.

Roads consist of residential streets in a gridded matrix that is intersected by curving north-south arterials. Bellevue Way/Lake Washington Boulevard East is the major north-south arterial in this area and connects Kirkland and Bellevue communities north and south of SR 520.

I-405 corridor aesthetics were developed through a community process and are now being implemented as highway-widening projects are constructed. A future possibility is to coordinate I-405 and SR 520 aesthetics to enhance this important gateway.



Ornamental plantings
Impervious surfaces
Coarse texture
Curvilinear
Larger scale buildings



Eastside Opportunities for Aesthetics



Lid - Bridges

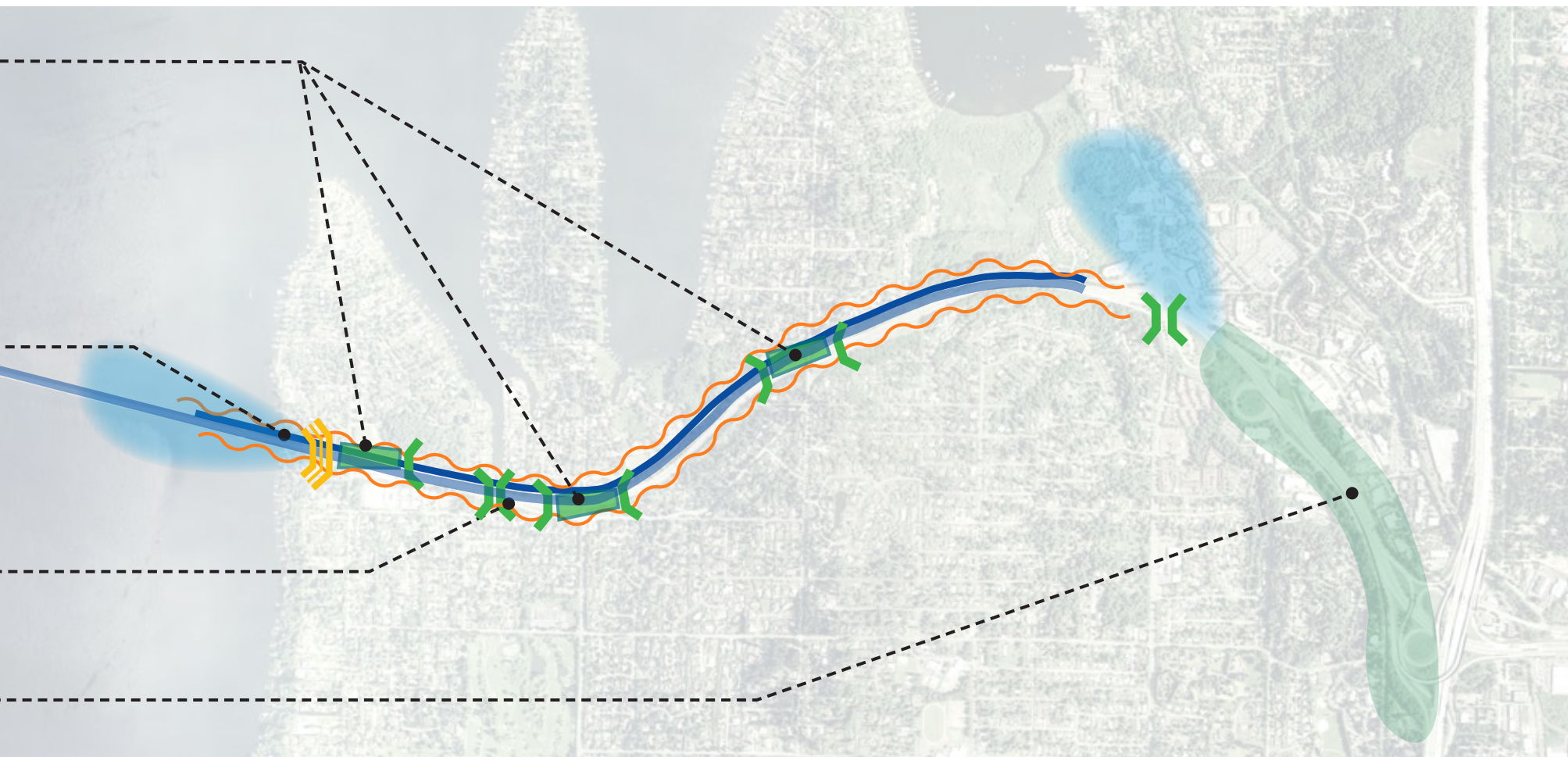
Evergreen Point Road
84th Avenue NE
92nd Avenue NE

Trails

SR 520 Regional
Points Loop

Walls

I-405 Transition section



Gateways



Walls



Local trail
Regional trail



Bridges, portals,
railings, screens



Lids



Views

Aesthetic Design Principles for the Eastside



LANDSCAPES

- Support and work with nature; don't compete with it
- Re-create green canopy with terraces, planters, and set backs for planting pockets
- Use interchanges and stormwater facilities as opportunities to enhance plantings and signify community entrances

BICYCLE-PEDESTRIAN PATH

- Design fence, railing, gate, and screen details to create comfortable, safe path
- Use low level lighting for safety
- Use way-finding signs
- Identify and strengthen connections to local parks and streets

VIEWS

- Provide a vantage place on the Evergreen Point Road bridge or lid for views of Lake Washington and the Olympic Mountains

WALLS

- Design surfaces that face neighborhoods to be integrated with the surroundings and to reflect community character



LIDS

- Use lids to reconnect communities; create places to walk with a variety of simple things to do
- Establish a family of styles for lid landscaping and features
- Include a place or feature on each lid that is a focal point for the community
- Design the focal point with community participation
- Provide a more pleasant environment for commuters at transit stops
- Design paving, benches, furnishings, and light fixtures to reflect community character

BRIDGES

- Use landscaping and other elements on exit ramps to signal that a change in driving behavior is required
- Allow interchanges to have an understated aesthetic character
- Design railings, screens, fences to appear as though they have long been a part of the community
- Enhance crossings with boulevard-style plantings



A Palette for the Eastside

LINE AND FORM

Flowing, organic, merging with existing landscape
Horizontal for calming and vertical for rhythm
Unifying

Right: stormwater treatment plant; Renton (L. Jordan)



NOAA "Bridge"; Seattle (Armajani)

Wilsonville Stormwater Treatment (Murase)

COLOR

Patina of age
Grays, tans and browns, silvery blues
and grays



MATERIALS

Stone, water, earth, wood
Looks well established

Right: Juanita Stream railing;
Kirkland

Far right: wall art and
detailing (V. Scurri)



